

SCHOOL FACILITIES INITIATIVE TASK FORCE
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 8, 2015 – 6:30 P.M.
TOWN HALL ANNEX, COMMUNITY ROOM 1

I. ROLL CALL

Present: Ackerman, Beaulieu (6:42 p.m.), Ambroise, DeMatto, Fitzgerald, Heller, Koehler, Trejo
Ex Officio: Watson, Schmidt (7:05 p.m.)
Staff: Oefinger, Reiner, Graner, Bresnayan
Consultant: Mike Zuba, Kemp Morhardt

There was no quorum, but task force members discussed items on the agenda.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – May 14, 2015 and August 20, 2015 – None.

The notes from the September 9, 2015 and September 10, 2015 meetings where no quorum was present were distributed.

III. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS

Chairman Heller noted receipt of e-mails from Christine Cabral and Karen Bryer resigning from the Task Force.

IV. ITEMS OF BUSINESS

- a. Housekeeping Items - None
- b. Discussion of Groton 2020 Plan and Process

Mr. Zuba provided an overview of the process to date. Mr. Morhardt noted that Groton's reimbursement rate has decreased by 4.3% to 44.29% for new construction and 54.29% for renovations. The change in reimbursement rate does not impact diversity schools. Mr. Morhardt reviewed revised schedules and cost models showing an increase in the net cost to Groton of about \$4.5 million for the preferred scenario.

Mr. Zuba reviewed potential special legislation pathways including seeking diversity status for all three schools, seeking a waiver of the maximum square footage cost for renovate to new, or a combination of both. Mr. Morhardt reviewed costs under the special legislation scenarios. Discussion followed on the likelihood of success and the inequity created by the number of magnet schools in New London.

Mr. Morhardt provided an overview of Scenario 1 which involved renovate to new at Cutler and West Side for the conversion to elementary schools including schedule and costs. Mr. Morhardt explained a possible argument for waiving the renovate to new threshold based on costs.

Task Force members were assured that the plan has not changed. However, now that renovate to new is an option again, the Task Force must explore all options to satisfy the public. The survey showed that the community is divided on new construction versus renovate to new.

Mr. Zuba summarized the options for the Task Force and opened up discussion.

Task Force members discussed various issues associated with renovate to new versus new construction; the approach and timing of seeking special legislation; involving local legislators; and modification of the educational specifications.

Discussion followed on the whether or not the Task Force supports following a parallel path exploring renovate to new options and if it would ultimately support a renovate to new plan if it was feasible.

Watson suggested that the Town pursue both legislative pathways so that people in the community know that the Task Force has done its due diligence. Mr. Morhardt noted that if both waivers are granted, then the Town has options and the question of renovate to new versus new can be put to the voters.

In a straw vote, the majority of those present agreed with pursuing both options (seeking diversity status for new construction of all three schools and seeking a waiver of the \$450 per square foot threshold for renovate to new for Cutler and West Side).

c. Next Steps

It was suggested that local legislators be engaged in a discussion at the November meeting.

V. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:07 p.m.